

Message Text

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60

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3510

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USINT ALGIERS

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 25156

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR FR XF

SUBJECT: FRENCH VIEWS OF MIDDLE EAST FOLLOWING

SAUVAGNARGUES' VISIT TO LEBANON AND JORDAN

1. ON OCTOBER 23 QUAI ISRAEL-JORDAN OFFICER BELLEISSUE TOLD US THAT AS A RESULT OF HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH KING HUSSEIN AND ARAFAT, FONMIN SAUVAGNARGUES IS MORE STRUCK THAN EVER BY THE DIFFICULTIES OF RECONCILING THE JORDANIAN AND PLO POSITIONS. BOTH HUSSEIN AND ARAFAT PRESENTED THEIR KNOWN POSITIONS, THE KING ACKNOWLEDGING ONLY THREE POST-EVACUATION REFERENDUM POSSIBILITIES FOR THE WEST BANK (ATTACHMENT TO JORDAN, FEDERATION WITH JORDAN, INDEPENDENCE) AND THE PLO CHIEF INTRANSIGENTLY DENYING HUSSEIN'S RIGHT TO REPRESENT PALESTINIANS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES AND INSISTING ON IMMEDIATE PLO CONTROL OF ANY LIBERATED AREA.

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2. SAUVAGNARGUES FOUND THE ATMOSPHERE OF HIS MEETING WITH ARAFAT "GOOD," BELLEISSUE SAID, AND WAS IMPRESSED WITH ARAFAT AS A MAN, DESCRIBING HIM AS "REALISTIC AND MODERATE." ARAFAT HAD THE GOOD SENSE NOT TO RAISE EMBARRASSING QUESTIONS AND DID NOT MENTION ESTABLISHMENT OF A PLO GOVERNMENT, FRENCH RECOGNITION OF THE PLO, U.S. EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A SETTLEMENT, OR THE GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS. ARAFAT BECAME SOMEWHAT EMOTIONAL ONLY WHILE DESCRIBING A LONG LIST OF ALLEGED ISRAELI ATROCITIES AGAINST THE PALESTINIANS, BELLEISSUE SAID.

3. ASKING THAT HE NOT BE QUOTED, EVEN TO THE FRENCH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, BELLEISSUE ASSERTED THAT SAUVAGNARGUES TOLD ARAFAT THAT THE EXISTENCE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL IS "OF CAPITAL IMPORTANCE TO FRANCE WHICH, LIKE THE U.S. AND USSR, VOTED FOR ITS CREATION IN 1947."

4. BELLEISSUE REMARKED THAT FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARDS A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT WILL DEPEND LARGELY ON THE OUTCOME OF THE RABAT SUMMIT, "BY FAR THE MOST SIGNIFICANT" SUCH MEETING SINCE THE CREATION OF THE ARAB LEAGUE. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE FRENCH ARE INCREASINGLY PLACING EMPHASIS IN THEIR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STATEMENTS ON THE CENTRAL IMPORTANCE TO ANY PEACE SETTLEMENT OF A SOLUTION TO THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. WHILE AGAIN WELCOMING THE SUCCESSFUL U.S. EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THE SINAI AND GOLAN DISENGAGEMENTS, BELLEISSUE SAID THAT THE ENTIRE PALESTINIAN QUESTION MUST NOW BE TACKLED AND IMPLIED THAT THE U.S. STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH IS NO LONGER ADEQUATE TO MEET THE SITUATION.

5. FINALLY, BELLEISSUE SAID THAT DURING A RECENT MEETING WITH THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO EGYPT, PRESIDENT SADAT EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE PLO AND HUSSEIN COULD BE RECONCILED AT RABAT BUT LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT HE IS VERY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE SUMMIT.
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